

Summary of site assessments for informing Proposed Freedom Camping Bylaw

Summary of site assessments against the criteria within the Freedom Camping Act 2011 to inform a Proposed South Wairarapa District Council Freedom Camping Bylaw

September 2023

Introduction

As part of the development of a proposed Freedom Camping Bylaw, South Wairarapa District Council (SWDC) has collated information on areas relevant to the proposed bylaw to inform where it may be appropriate to prohibit, restrict or permit freedom camping. This document provides a summary of the full site assessment document developed for this purpose.

Freedom camping is currently permitted by the national legislation, the Freedom Camping Act 2011 (the Act), on all local authority land, that is land which is owned or managed by or on behalf of Council. The Act does recognise that some areas may not be appropriate for freedom camping. A freedom camping bylaw can identify areas that may need protection through restrictions or prohibitions on freedom camping.

Sites are assessed against three criteria prescribed by section 6(1) of the Freedom Camping Act 2011, using an assessment matrix considered best practice by the Local Government sector. The assessment matrix is used to inform where it may be necessary and appropriate to prohibit or restrict freedom camping according to the following criteria:

1. to protect the area – for example areas that are environmentally or culturally sensitive.
2. to protect health and safety - to keep freedom campers and other visitors to an area safe.
3. to protect access to the area - where the presence of freedom campers could block access or damage infrastructure.

The sites included in this assessment are Local Authority Areas which have been identified as locations where there is a specific interest in managing freedom camping.

FREEDOM CAMPING AREA ASSESSMENT MATRIX

PROTECT THE AREA Considers cultural or historical significance and the natural environment		PROTECT THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PEOPLE WHO MAY VISIT THE AREA Considers levels of vehicular traffic (car parks/lookout points), use for other activities (like sports grounds), and issues of persistent vandalism/vagrancy		PROTECT ACCESS TO THE AREA Considers damage caused by vehicular access to flora and fauna and the impact that people accessing the site will have on other users of the area	
Has historical, cultural or environmental significance and requires full protection	5	Risk to health and safety is too great to allow access to the site, including no vehicle access to, or car parking on, the site.	5	No access to the site, and any vehicle access would cause significant damage.	5
Contains some significant historical, cultural or environmental areas.	4	Significant health and safety concerns.	4	Restricted access to the site, and any vehicle access would cause damage.	4
Contains some areas that should be protected	3	Minimal health and safety concerns (risk for the elderly or children)	3	Moderate access to the site, and any vehicle access would cause minimal damage.	3
Low concerns about areas that need protecting	2	Low concerns regarding health and safety	2	Good access to the site, which would not cause damage.	2
No significant area concerns	1	No health and safety concerns	1	Fully formed access to the site	1

Applying the assessment matrix

- Each area is given a score of 1-5 for each of the three criteria.
- If the total score of all three criteria is **9 or more**, restricting or prohibiting freedom camping on the area may be necessary. If the score for **any one of the three criteria is 5**, this also indicates a need to protect the area by prohibiting or restricting freedom camping.
- If the total score of all three criteria is **8 or less** and the area is a reserve*, there is an indication that freedom camping may be permitted on the reserve. For other areas that have a total score of **8 or less**, the tool indicates that it is appropriate for freedom camping to remain permitted.

* NB: freedom camping on gazetted reserves is otherwise prohibited under the Reserves Act (RA) 1977 unless provided for in an individual Reserve Management Plan (RMP). The inclusion of a reserve within a bylaw gives Council access to the enforcement tools (infringements and fines) under the Act.

Summary tables

Area assessed	Current Status	Score	Summary of assessment	Recommendation
Memorial Square, Martinborough	Camping not provided for in RMP, so is prohibited under section 44 of the RA.	Total: 12 <i>Protect area:</i> 4 <i>Protect H&S:</i> 4 <i>Protect access:</i> 4	Area has historic, cultural and recreational value. Area is of high use to the community with multiple services and amenities.	Prohibit.
Considine & Centennial Park Reserve, Martinborough	Provision for paid campground in RMP, otherwise prohibited under section 44 of the RA.	Total: 9 <i>Protect area:</i> 1 <i>Protect H&S:</i> 4 <i>Protect access:</i> 4	Area is an important sport and recreation hub for the community. Vehicle access to reserve would cause damage to sports grounds and recreational amenities. There is an existing paid campground.	Omit from the Proposed Bylaw. Paid campground outside the scope of the Freedom Camping Act 2011.
Main Street/CBD, Featherston	Main Street is State Highway 2, under control of Waka Kotahi NZTA.	Total: 11 <i>Protect area:</i> 3 <i>Protect H&S:</i> 4 <i>Protect access:</i> 4	Area has historic, cultural and recreational value. Area is of high use to the community with multiple services and amenities.	Prohibit. Declare land to be a local authority area in accordance with bylaw made under section 10A of the Act.
Clifford Square & Fell Museum, Featherston	Camping not provided for in RMP, so is prohibited under section 44 of the RA. Signage and website promote self-contained vehicle camping behind Fell Museum.	Total: 10 <i>Protect area:</i> 4 <i>Protect H&S:</i> 4 <i>Protect access:</i> 2	Area has historic, cultural and recreational value. Area is of high use to the community with multiple services and amenities.	Formalise camping area behind Fell Museum with the following restrictions: Three night maximum within a four-week period. Certified self-contained vehicles only.
Card & Market Reserves, Featherston	Camping not provided for in RMP, so is prohibited under section 44 of the RA.	Total: 9 <i>Protect area:</i> 1 <i>Protect H&S:</i> 4 <i>Protect access:</i> 4	Area is an important sport and recreation hub for the community. Vehicle access to reserve would cause damage to sports grounds and recreational amenities.	Omit from the Proposed Bylaw. Freedom Camping prohibited under the RA.
Ōtauira Reserve, Featherston	Camping not provided for in RMP, so is prohibited under section 44 of the RA. Gates closed overnight.	Total: 9 <i>Protect area:</i> 3 <i>Protect H&S:</i> 4 <i>Protect access:</i> 2	Area has health and safety concerns from litter, lack of facilities, no lighting and poor vehicle access with multiple potholes.	Prohibit.

Area assessed	Current Status	Score	Summary of assessment	Recommendation
Sakura Garden, Featherston (Featherston Garden of Remembrance)	Camping not provided for in RMP, so is prohibited under section 44 of the RA.	Total: 7 <i>Protect area:</i> 5 <i>Protect H&S:</i> 1 <i>Protect access:</i> 1	Area has significant historic and cultural value.	Omit from the Proposed Bylaw. Freedom Camping prohibited under the RA.
Main Street/CBD, Greytown	Main Street is State Highway 2, under control of Waka Kotahi NZTA	Total: 9 <i>Protect area:</i> 1 <i>Protect H&S:</i> 4 <i>Protect access:</i> 4	Area is of high use to the community with multiple services and amenities.	Prohibit. Declare land to be a Local Authority Area in accordance with a bylaw made under section 10A of the Act.
Hastwell Street Carpark, Greytown	Land leased by Council from Workingman's Club. Existing signage prohibits overnight camping.	Total: 9 <i>Protect area:</i> 1 <i>Protect H&S:</i> 4 <i>Protect access:</i> 4	Intention of lease to provide short-term day parking for access to high use area including Main Street shopping area.	Prohibit. Retains consistency with lease arrangements in the car park.
Soldiers Memorial Park, Greytown	Provision for paid campground in RMP, otherwise prohibited under section 44 of the RA.	Total: 6 <i>Protect area:</i> 3 <i>Protect H&S:</i> 2 <i>Protect access:</i> 1	Area is an important sport and recreation hub for the community with multiple uses. There is an existing paid campground.	Omit from the Proposed Bylaw. Freedom Camping prohibited under the RA.
Te Awaiti Reserve	Camping area provided for in RMP. Signage indicates a maximum stay of 21 days.	Total: 10 <i>Protect area:</i> 3 <i>Protect H&S:</i> 4 <i>Protect access:</i> 3	Area is a popular camping location on the coastline amongst multiple cultural, historical and environmental sites of significance. It is vulnerable to health and safety risk from flood due to proximity to river.	Restrict. Maintain existing camping area with the following restrictions: 28 night maximum stay within a 12-month period.
Sandy Bay boat launch	Land leased by Council. Camping prohibited under lease. Camping prohibited in RMP.	Total: 6 <i>Protect area:</i> 1 <i>Protect H&S:</i> 1 <i>Protect access:</i> 4	Area provides an important point of access for recreational boats users.	Omit from the Proposed Bylaw. Freedom Camping prohibited under the RA. Covered under general coastal prohibition.
Awhea Reserve (Manurewa Point)	Camping not provided for in RMP, so is prohibited under section 44 of the RA.	Total: 12 <i>Protect area:</i> 5 <i>Protect H&S:</i> 5 <i>Protect access:</i> 2	Area has environmental significance with an established seal colony and there is a cultural site of significance within reserve.	Omit from the Proposed Bylaw. Freedom Camping prohibited under the RA. Covered under general coastal prohibition.

Area assessed	Current Status	Score	Summary of assessment	Recommendation
North Tora Reserve	Camping area provided for in RMP. Signage indicates a maximum stay of 21 days.	Total: 10 <i>Protect area:</i> 4 <i>Protect H&S:</i> 4 <i>Protect access:</i> 2	Area is a popular camping location on the coastline amongst multiple cultural, historical and environmental sites of significance. It is vulnerable to health and safety risk from flood due to proximity to river.	Restrict. Maintain existing camping area with the following restrictions: 28 night maximum stay within a 12-month period.
South Tora Recreation Reserve	Camping area provided for in RMP. Vehicle-based camping prohibited. Signage indicates a maximum stay of 21 days.	Total: 10 <i>Protect area:</i> 3 <i>Protect H&S:</i> 4 <i>Protect access:</i> 3	Area is a popular camping location. It is vulnerable to coastal erosion which is reducing the existing camping area. Overflow of campers occurs onto neighbouring land. There is some risk to health and safety from storm surge. Alternative location may be needed in future.	Restrict. Maintain existing camping area with the following restrictions: 28 night maximum stay within a 12-month period. No vehicle-based camping.
White Rock	Land under Treaty Settlement, pending Statutory Board. Fee Simple Estate. Council maintains toilet facilities on a small parcel of the Reserve. Camping area identified in Council's Coastal Camping Guide.	Total: 11 <i>Protect area:</i> 4 <i>Protect H&S:</i> 4 <i>Protect access:</i> 3	Area has environmental significance as habitat for threatened shorebirds. Remote area with limited access.	Restrict. Maintain existing camping area with the following restrictions: 28 night maximum stay within a 12-month period. <i>Pending advice from settlement entity.</i>
Ngapotiki Reserve (Te Rakauwhakamataku Point)	Camping area provided for in RMP.	Total: 11 <i>Protect area:</i> 5 <i>Protect H&S:</i> 3 <i>Protect access:</i> 3	Area has environmental significance situated within a Greater Wellington Biodiversity Management area. Remote area accessed via paper road and in some places through private property.	Omit from the Proposed Bylaw. Area is not accessible for the public and therefore camping activities are not able to be enforced by Council.

Area assessed	Current Status	Score	Summary of assessment	Recommendation
Ngawi Reserve	Camping area provided for in RMP. Signage indicates a maximum stay of 21 days.	Total: 10 <i>Protect area:</i> 3 <i>Protect H&S:</i> 4 <i>Protect access:</i> 3	Area is a popular camping location along the coastline with multiple recreational uses. Access to be managed and ensured to remain available to all users.	Restrict. Maintain existing camping area with the following restrictions: 28 night maximum stay within a 12-month period.
Ngawi Surf Breaks	Camping area provided for in RMP. Signage indicates a maximum stay of 21 days.	Total: 10 <i>Protect area:</i> 4 <i>Protect H&S:</i> 4 <i>Protect access:</i> 2	Area is a popular camping location along the coastline with multiple recreational uses. Vulnerable to health and safety risk from coastal erosion and storm surge. Access to be managed and ensured is available to all users.	Restrict. Maintain existing camping area with the following restrictions: 28 night maximum stay within a 12-month period.
Mangatoetoe	Camping not provided for in RMP, so is prohibited under section 44 of the RA.	Total: 9 <i>Protect area:</i> 3 <i>Protect H&S:</i> 4 <i>Protect access:</i> 2	Ocean side of the road vulnerable to health and safety risk from erosion and storm surge. Areas provide use and access for Local community. Areas have no formed vehicle access.	Omit from the Proposed Bylaw. Freedom Camping prohibited under the RA. Covered under general coastal prohibition. Potential for future development to provide for camping on additional land parcels.
Cape Palliser Coastal Road	Camping permitted on all Local Authority Land except where prohibited under RA.	Total: 15 <i>Protect area:</i> 5 <i>Protect H&S:</i> 5 <i>Protect access:</i> 5	Area is vulnerable to significant risk from coastal erosion. Area also has a high number of significant cultural and historical sites. It is the sole access road for communities and attractions located along this section of coastline.	Prohibit. Except for specific areas provided for as restricted areas (assessed separately).
Tora Farm Settlement Road and Te Awaiti Road (to include Ngapotiki and White Rock Roads)	Camping permitted on all Local Authority Land except where prohibited under RA.	Total: 15 <i>Protect area:</i> 5 <i>Protect H&S:</i> 5 <i>Protect access:</i> 5	Area has a high number of significant cultural and historical sites. Area is vulnerable to extreme weather events, coastal storms and erosion. They are the sole access roads for communities and attractions located along this section of coastline.	Prohibit. Except for specific areas provided for as restricted areas (assessed separately).

Area assessed	Current Status	Score	Summary of assessment	Recommendation
Lake Domain	Land under Treaty Settlement, pending Statutory Board. Camping area continues under Council management. Signage indicates a maximum stay of 28 days.	Total: 7 <i>Protect area:</i> 5 <i>Protect H&S:</i> 1 <i>Protect access:</i> 1	Area has strong environmental and cultural significance	Restrict. Maintain existing camping area with the following restrictions: 28 night maximum stay within a 12-month period. <i>Pending advice from settlement entity.</i>
Lake Shore Scenic Reserve	Land under Treaty Settlement, pending Statutory Board. Current management undertaken by DOC.	Total: 7 <i>Protect area:</i> 5 <i>Protect H&S:</i> 1 <i>Protect access:</i> 1	Area has strong environmental significance	Omit from the Proposed Bylaw. Area falls outside the scope of the Freedom Camping Act 2011.